



**THOMAS L. GARTHWAITE, M.D.**  
Director and Chief Medical Officer

**FRED LEAF**  
Chief Operating Officer

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES  
313 N. Figueroa, Los Angeles, CA 90012  
(213) 240-8101

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

**Gloria Molina**  
First District

**Yvonne Brathwaite Burke**  
Second District

**Zev Yaroslavsky**  
Third District

**Don Knabe**  
Fourth District

**Michael D. Antonovich**  
Fifth District

September 11, 2002

**TO:** Each Supervisor

**FROM:** Thomas L. Garthwaite, MD  
Director and Chief Medical Officer

**SUBJECT: CHECKLIST OF ACTIONS RELATED TO REDESIGN IMPLEMENTATION**

This is in response to your Board's action at your July 23, 2002 meeting, directing me to develop and report back within 45 days on a checklist of actions the Department of Health Services will undertake to notify the community, including patients, community leaders and employees of any reductions in services.

**Implementation Plan for Closure of DHS Health Centers**

In addition to adherence to all the posting and notice requirements under California Health and Safety Code, Section 1442.5 (Beilenson Act), the Department has developed an implementation plan related to the eleven health centers approved for closure. The plan includes assignment of a responsible manager for each step and is divided into the following categories:

Staffing	Patient Scheduling	Patient Notification
Referrals	Patient Transportation	Medical Records
CHP Patients	Finance	Inventory
Mail Service	Telecommunications	Other County Depts
Vendor Services		

A template of the implementation plan for closure of health centers is included in this packet as Attachment 1.

**Patient Notification Process**

On August 21, 2002, the day following the Beilenson Hearing, notices were posted at the eleven health centers informing patients that the health centers would be closed. These notices were printed in both English and Spanish and directed patients on where to find other health care providers in the area. We also posted a notice, in 23 languages, advising that interpretation services are available. A copy of these notices is included as Attachment 2.

A script for health center staff with answers to questions frequently asked by patients has also been developed and distributed. A copy of the script is included in this packet as Attachment 3. A similar script was developed for the toll free InfoLine. Any question that cannot be answered by InfoLine staff is referred to the Office of Ambulatory Care for follow-up. The scripts are updated, as necessary, to address additional questions that may arise.

A notice of the closure with information about other nearby DHS and PPP facilities has been mailed to all patients seen at the 11 health centers in the last year. This initial mailer was sent in both English and Spanish. A sample of the mailing is included as Attachment 4. In the initial mailer, patients were advised to expect a follow-up letter. Through that follow-up letter, patients with medical conditions that warrant further follow-up will be assigned and/or referred to alternate sites to receive health care, as discussed in detail below.

### **Process for Assigning and/or Referring Patients to Alternate Sites**

A patient acuity triage process has been established for all patients seen within the last year at each of the 11 health centers approved for closure. The draft process and tools are found in Attachment 5. This process, drafted by the Department's Chief Medical Office and the Office of Ambulatory Care, incorporates:

- Summaries of encounter information for each patient seen within the last twelve months at an impacted health center. The encounter summaries cover all treatment sought at DHS and PPP facilities, including hospitalizations and emergency room visits.
- Reviews of medical records to provide additional information on patients diagnosed with one or more chronic conditions of medical significance.
- Procedures for patient communications, patient referrals and disposition of medical records dependent on patient's burden of illness and stability of the patient's conditions.

### **Patient Referral Process**

The main objectives of the formal triage process are to identify all patients with chronic conditions that require follow-up care and to notify these patients of the specific facility where they will receive their follow-up care. To the extent possible, these patients will be referred to DHS facilities.

Some patients will be notified that their site for follow-up care is a PPP Strategic Partner site if there is not enough DHS capacity in the geographical area to absorb care for all patients identified as needing follow-up care. Our first goal is to match the severity of the patient's condition with a facility's clinical expertise. Therefore, the patients with the most critical conditions will be referred to DHS facilities. We are working with our Strategic Partners to develop the procedure for accepting these patient referrals. The procedure will cover steps that must take place to ensure the smoothest transition possible for these patients, such as obtaining consent for medical records.

### **Employee Notification**

We have placed 340 impacted employees in critical unfilled vacancies in order to avoid a cascade and layoff. Most of the critical unfilled vacancies are within the LAC+USC Medical Center and the California Children's Services Program (CCS), which is fully funded through

Each Supervisor  
September 11, 2002  
Page Three

State funds. Impacted employees will be notified by letter on September 16, 2002 of their reassignment and its effective date. To the extent necessary, some of these effective assignment dates may be delayed to allow for completion of the medical record review process.

In addition to the required meet and confer process under the County's agreements with labor, the Department has aggressively sought to inform DHS employees about the redesign plan. These efforts have included the Director holding eleven employee forums, expansion of "Connections" to be a department-wide publication and holding on-going employee education programs in cooperation with SEIU Local 660.

The Department is also meeting regularly with the Chief Administrative Office, Department of Human Resources and other departments to keep them informed of our progress and assistance needed, such as the disposition of impacted employees.

### **Community Notification Efforts**

The Department has developed a one-page notice about the closure of the eleven health centers that has been sent to the city managers of all 88 cities in the County. City staff are being encouraged to post the notice in public buildings and gathering places. A copy of the notice is included in this packet as Attachment 6.

The Department has participated in a number of meetings with editorial boards of newspapers throughout the County. The purpose of these meetings was to proactively inform the media about the County's redesign plan and to answer any questions that may arise. The Department has met with the Los Angeles Times, Daily News, San Gabriel Valley Tribune, and the Long Beach Press-Telegram. Future meetings will include La Opinion, Daily Breeze, the Centennial and other media outlets.

As you know, the Department embarked on a stakeholder process through the formation of the Planning Advisory Group that has met nine times since April. At your Board's instruction, we also formed a Financing Oversight Advisory Group to review any potential revenue options available to the County. This group has met three times. The meetings are open to the public and there are approximately 120 people who receive regular e-mail notification of the meetings. The Department has also stepped up its efforts to make extensive information and data available to the community on its website at [www.ladhs.org](http://www.ladhs.org). For example, all Board correspondence related to the plan, the Department's budget forecast and other financial data, and various documents related to implementation of the Board-approved plan can be found on the website.

Please let me know if we may provide you with any additional information.

TLG:jw  
Attachments (6)

C: Chief Administrative Officer  
County Counsel  
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors